

Chapter 39

Edmodo in an Institute of Teacher Education: A Platform for Blended Learning

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ABSTRACT

Edmodo is a free online learning platform for teachers to communicate and collaborate with students. It is a digital communication tool that has been designed to work across a range of devices, suitable for blended learning. To maximize learning and meet the challenges of the current digitalized classroom, supplemental blended learning was adopted in an English literature course in an institute of teacher education in Kedah, Malaysia. This chapter describes how Edmodo was used to manage blended learning, with the focus on online activities created in posts, small groups, assignment tool, and polling tool. The activities were planned based on the five ingredients on blended learning by Carman. The result of a poll done in Edmodo showed 74% of the students agreed that they were able to explicate Shakespeare after attending the course, and 81% opined that the course was effectively organized in Edmodo. Based on the positive feedback, Edmodo is recommended for subsequent blended learning courses.

INTRODUCTION

Blended learning has received much attention in recent years due to its ability to accommodate the needs of 21st century learning where learning goes beyond the classroom walls. Blended learning refers to the mixing of traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning, and it includes the use of digital content, resources, and tools to enhance, extend and transform the learning process (Pape, Sheehan & Worrell, 2012). Blended learning can be defined as a combination of any online and traditional brick-and-mortar learning environments which also utilizes other modes to improve learning outcomes and save

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cost. (Banados, 2006). Therefore, blended learning can be defined as the integration of complementary face-to-face and online strategies (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008).

Implementing blended learning programs is one alternative for English learners who do not get enough exposure to the language in class or opportunities to communicate, as well as make explorations regarding the language (Tomlinson & Whittaker, 2013). Educational systems such as Moodle as well as Edmodo allow learners to begin interaction and share information outside the class. Particularly if instructors come across an absence of time with their students, it is much better to review a topic with them by means of social media in educational ways (Yagci, 2015). As a result, students can execute the tasks outside the usual course duration by using online educational platforms. (Tomlinson & Whittaker, 2013).

There are many learning management systems (LMS) available and one prominent international education network which offers its users communication, cooperation and also training techniques is Edmodo (Cauley, n.d.; Edmodo, 2013; Renard, 2016). Edmodo is a secure environment and devoid of advertisements, video games, as well as other diversions that might interrupt student learning. Teachers can post announcements and also tasks for their students on Edmodo. Students use the network to communicate with their teachers to share suggestions, problems, and useful tips; ask questions concerning lessons and research; and also team up with various other classmates on tasks and group work (Arroyo, 2011; BusinessWire, 2014; Edmodo, 2014; Mills & Chandra, 2011; Renard, 2016).

In this chapter, Edmodo was chosen by the authors to be the platform to facilitate blended learning because the institutes of teacher education in Malaysia do not provide nor prescribe any official online platform for use in the institutions. In the literature course taught by the authors, *Drama in English*, Edmodo was used by four lecturers teaching the course to manage the virtual classroom, share materials, communicate and collaborate among themselves; and with two classes of students which added up to 27 students. Four features of Edmodo were utilized to create online tasks. They were **posts**, **small groups**, **assignment tool**, and **polling tool**. Other digital applications were also used such as Kahoot, Padlet, Word Search Maker and Instant Online Crossword Puzzle Maker. With Edmodo, online tasks were organized and recorded in a more systematic way. Hence, the objective of this chapter is to share how Edmodo was used as a platform to maximize learning in a literature course through blended learning.

BACKGROUND

The ways of teaching and learning have changed in this fast-growing world of technology. Learning is no longer within the confines of a school compound. Virtual classrooms are becoming more popular with the presence of the World Wide Web. To support online learning, many learning management systems have been created. An LMS is a system that enables users to “create, administer, manage, and analyze eLearning courses and trainings. It is the engine that powers eLearning” (CAE Computer Aided USA Corp., 2018, para. 1). Besides, it is also a massive depot for the storing and tracking of information. With a login and password, one can access online resources at anytime and anywhere (Pappas, 2017).

There are many LMSs available; some are more suited for the academia while others are for the corporate and business world. Although the LMSs have basic features, each has its own distinct core elements, which makes it more suitable for different audiences. Some basic features that qualify a software system to be an LMS are platforms for managing learning content, managing user roles, and delivering the learning content. They are the digital platforms that move, track and enhance learning (Quigley, 2018).

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